Claims:

1. A method for searching a plurality of machine-readable information sources, said method comprising the steps of:

mapping a search string to a plurality of search terms, wherein each said search term relates to at least one of said plurality of information sources;

indicating at least one information source that each said search term relates to; and

searching at least one indicated information source using selected ones of said search terms.

2. The method of claim 1, comprising the further steps of receiving said initial search term from a user and providing a result of said search to said user.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein said step of indicating comprises one or more of the steps in the group of steps consisting of:

indicating to said user which of said plurality of information sources each of said search terms relates to; and

indicating to said user at least one vocabulary each said search term is included in, wherein each vocabulary relates to at least one of said information sources.

4. The method of claim 3, comprising the further step of enabling said user to select and de-select ones of said plurality of information sources whereon said searching step is performed.

5. The method of claim 3, comprising the further step of enabling said user to replace ones of said plurality of search terms with replacement search terms.

6. The method of claim 3, comprising the further step of enabling said user to add further search terms to said plurality of search terms.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein each of said plurality of search terms is selected from a vocabulary of terms used in a related one of said plurality of information sources.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein said plurality of search terms are selected from a meta-vocabulary comprising a list of terms included in a plurality of vocabularies.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein said plurality of information sources comprise medical databases.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein said mapping step is performed once only for searching a particular search string.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein said search string comprises a plurality of terms and said step of mapping comprises the step of mapping each of said plurality of terms to a plurality of synonyms.

12. An apparatus for searching a plurality of machine-readable information sources, said apparatus comprising:

a communications interface for transmitting and receiving data;

a memory unit for storing data and instructions to be performed by a processing unit; and

a processing unit coupled to said communications unit and said memory unit, said processing unit programmed to:

map a search string to a plurality of search terms, wherein each said search term relates to at least one of said plurality of information sources;

output an indication of at least one information source that each said search term relates to; and

search at least one indicated information source using selected ones of said search terms.

13. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said processing unit is further programmed to receive said search string from a user and to output a result of said search to said user.

14. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said processing unit is programmed to perform one or more instructions from the group of instructions consisting of:

indicate which of said plurality of information sources each of said search terms relates to; and

indicate at least one vocabulary each said search term is included in, wherein each vocabulary relates to at least one of said information sources.

15. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said processing unit is further programmed to enable selection and de-selection of ones of said plurality of information sources whereon said searching is performed.

16. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said processing unit is further programmed to enable replacement of ones of said search terms with replacement search terms.

17. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said processing unit is further programmed to enable further search terms to be added to said plurality of search terms.

18. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said processing unit is programmed to select each of said search terms from a vocabulary of terms used in a related one of said plurality of information sources.

19. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said processing unit is programmed to select said search terms from a meta-vocabulary comprising a list of terms included in a plurality of vocabularies.

20. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said plurality of information sources comprise medical databases.

21. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said initial search term is mapped once only for searching a particular search string.

22. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said search string comprises a plurality of terms and said processing unit is further programmed to map each of said plurality of terms to a plurality of synonyms.

23. A computer program product comprising a computer readable medium having a computer program recorded therein for searching a plurality of information sources, said computer program product comprising:

computer program code for mapping a search string to a plurality of search terms, wherein each said search term relates to at least one of said plurality of information sources;

computer program code for outputting an indication of at least one information source that each said search term relates to; and

computer program code for searching at least one indicated information source using selected ones of said search terms.

24. The computer program product of claim 23, further comprising computer program code for enabling a user to submit said initial search term.

25. The computer program product of claim 23, wherein said computer program code for outputting comprises one or more computer program code selected from the group of computer program code consisting of:

computer program code for indicating which of said plurality of information sources each of said search terms relates to; and

computer program code for indicating at least one vocabulary each said search term is included in, wherein each vocabulary relates to at least one of said information sources.

26. The computer program product of claim 23, further comprising computer program code for enabling selection and de-selection of ones of said plurality of information sources whereon said searching is performed.

27. The computer program product of claim 23, further comprising computer program code for enabling replacement of ones of said search terms with replacement search terms.

28. The computer program product of claim 23, further comprising computer program code for enabling addition of further search terms to said plurality of search terms.

29. The computer program product of claim 23, further comprising computer program code for selecting each of said plurality of search terms from a vocabulary of terms used in a related one of said plurality of information sources.

30. The computer program product of claim 23, further comprising computer program code for selecting said plurality of search terms from a meta-vocabulary comprising a list of terms included in a plurality of vocabularies.

31. The computer program product of claim 23, wherein said plurality of information sources comprise medical databases.

32. The computer program product of claim 23, wherein said initial search term is mapped once only for searching a particular search string.

33. The computer program product of claim 23, wherein said search string comprises a plurality of terms and said computer program code for mapping comprises computer program code for mapping each of said plurality of terms to a plurality of synonyms.

34. A method for searching a plurality of machine-readable information sources, said method comprising the steps of:

mapping a search string to a plurality of search terms, wherein each said search term relates to at least one of said plurality of information sources; and

searching at least one information source using selected ones of said search terms.

35. An apparatus for searching a plurality of machine-readable information sources, said apparatus comprising:

a communications interface for transmitting and receiving data;

a memory unit for storing data and instructions to be performed by a processing unit; and

a processing unit coupled to said communications unit and said memory unit, said processing unit programmed to:

map a search string to a plurality of search terms, wherein each said search term relates to at least one of said plurality of information sources; and

search at least one information source using selected ones of said search terms.

36. A computer program product comprising a computer readable medium having a computer program recorded therein for searching a plurality of information sources, said computer program product comprising:

computer program code for mapping a search string to a plurality of search terms, wherein each said search term relates to at least one of said plurality of information sources; and

computer program code for searching at least one information source using selected ones of said search terms.